



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Franklin County Participates in National Stepping Up Day of Action *County Partners to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illness in Jails*

May 9, 2018 – Chambersburg, PA – Franklin County Commissioners proclaimed yesterday as Franklin County Stepping Up Day of Action to share the progress made in addressing the number of individuals with mental illness in our jail, and to raise public awareness and understanding of this important issue. Franklin County collaboratively works with law enforcement, the court, the jail and human services agencies to reduce the number of people with mental illness in the Franklin County Jail and to improve outcomes for some of the county's most vulnerable residents. The Stepping Up Day of Action was an opportunity to bring awareness to the efforts being made to connect people to treatment and services in lieu of incarceration.

Cori Seilhamer, Mental Health Program Specialist and Certified CIT Coordinator, and Kay Martin, Keystone Mental Health Community Liaison/Co-responder, presented information to the Commissioners regarding the success of the Mental Health Co-responder program in diverting individuals away from the criminal justice system as well as how an increase in Crisis Intervention Trained (CIT) law enforcement officers has positively contributed to that success. Ms. Seilhamer noted that CIT is more than training—it brings organizations together and provides tools to enhance supports in our community. Greencastle Police Chief John Phillippy commented, "This is, without a doubt, the most productive collaboration I've seen in Franklin County. It keeps the members of my community safer and the members of my department safer."

Commissioner Chairman Dave Keller thanked the law enforcement officers in attendance and said, "We appreciate how local and state police have embraced Crisis Intervention Training provided by the county and worked with the Mental Health Co-responder to help individuals with mental illness."

The Board of Commissioners passed a resolution to join the Stepping Up Initiative on January 5, 2016. Led by the National Association of Counties, the American Psychiatric Association Foundation and The Council of State Governments Justice Center, Stepping Up provides counties with a framework and tools for creating a collaborative, system-wide plan of action to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jail in ways that not only improve public safety but also promote positive outcomes for individuals with mental illness, their families, and our community.

"Stepping Up provides the public and policy makers more awareness of Mental Health issues and the need for alternatives to treatment versus incarceration. My hope is that our highly successful co-responder program grows to include Chambersburg borough and eventually all of Franklin County," said Commissioner Bob Thomas.

Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski expressed his gratitude to all involved and added, "Thank you to the staff and volunteers of the Mental Health Association of Franklin and Fulton Counties for their tireless advocacy for many who are unable or unwilling to speak for themselves."

Franklin County Commissioners, in addition to proclaiming May 8, 2018 as the Franklin County Stepping Up Day of Action, proclaimed May as Mental Health Month and May 13-19, 2018 as National Law Enforcement Appreciation Week.

For additional information on Franklin County visit www.franklincountypa.gov

More information on the national Stepping Up initiative is available at: www.StepUpTogether.org.



Representatives from local and state law enforcement, Franklin County government and community agencies join together to recognize May 8, 2018 as Franklin County Stepping Up Day of Action.

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